

VZCZCXRO5368
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0807/01 1351147
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151147Z MAY 09
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4861
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000807

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR. JOINT
STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: UPTICK IN SETTLER VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN MAY

REF: A. JERUSALEM 698
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 697
[1](#)C. JERUSALEM 648
[1](#)D. JERUSALEM 615
[1](#)E. JERUSALEM 219

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. NGO and Palestinian security contacts have reported multiple incidents of settler violence during the first two weeks of May, continuing a trend reported in March and April (reftels). Specific recent incidents include Hebron area settlers attacking Palestinian farmers, settlers continuing attacks on Palestinian villages southwest of Bethlehem, and an assault on a Palestinian farmer west of Nablus. End summary.

More Settler Violence in Hebron Area

[1](#)2. (C) Head of NGO Rabbis for Human Rights Arik Ascherman told Poloff on May 15 that settlers from Mitzpe Yair outpost, south of Yatta, have been routinely attacking Palestinian shepherds and farmers grazing their sheep and harvesting wheat crops on Palestinian land. Ascherman said these Palestinians "have never had a problem here before," but now the settlers are attempting to expand the buffer zone around their outpost, and are assisted by "young IDF soldiers whose default is to kick out the Palestinians first and ask questions later."

[1](#)3. (C) NGO Ta'ayush activist Ezra Nawi told Poloff on May 15 that a dozen settlers from Karmel, south of Hebron, attacked three Palestinian homes in Abu al-Khair village, east of Yatta, on May 13, shooting and killing two dogs. Nawi said Karmel settlers are engaging in violence to pressure over 150 Palestinians in Abu al-Khair to evacuate their homes, which are located near a new settlement road. The head of the Hebron office for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Matteo Benatti, told Poloff on May 14 that such incidents are becoming so common that Palestinians are generally not reporting incidents unless they cause serious injuries or damage.

[1](#)4. (C) NGO Ta'ayush activist Amiel Bardi told Poloff on May 15 that said that settlers from Hebron attacked a shepherd harvesting wheat west of Kiryat Arba settlement on May 13, breaking his finger. Bardi said Palestinian landowner Abu Jabari won a case in the Israeli High Court of Justice in 2002, granting him the right to cultivate his land, but "there is little we can do to enforce the court orders," and settlers have routinely attacked Palestinians there. (Note: Jabari's land is in the same area as the Rajabi Compound, from which settlers were evacuated in December 2008. End note.)

15. (C) PA security sources said that Hebron settlers marched through H2 to Kiryat Arba settlement on May 14, protesting an IDF plan to open the road to local Palestinian vehicles. The IDF distributed leaflets in early May instructing Palestinian vehicle owners in H2 to apply to the Israeli Civil Administration for permits, while declaring an extension of the closure of the road for Palestinian vehicle owners for another six months, until November.

Multiple Incidents Around Beit Ummar

16. (C) PA security sources reported on May 1 that settlers from Bat Ayin entered Kirbat Safa village, north of Beit Ummar, and clashed with Palestinians there until IDF soldiers intervened, injuring two Palestinians with rubber bullets. On May 9, Bat Ayin settlers accompanied by IDF soldiers drove off Palestinians from Kirbat Safa attempting to cultivate their land. (Note: Bat Ayin settlers have frequently targeted Khirbat Safa and Beit Ummar Palestinians since the April 2 axe attack in which a Palestinian killed one settler child and injured another (ref D). End note.) PA security sources also reported that settlers from Karmi Tzur, south of Bet Ummar, repeatedly prevented Palestinians from accessing their land during May.

Palestinian Farmer Attacked and Road Blocked Near Nablus

17. (C) Ascherman said settlers from Havat Gilad settlement, west of Nablus, physically assaulted a 20-year-old Palestinian farmer on May 1 with rocks and an unknown gas

JERUSALEM 00000807 002 OF 002

substance; the farmer was later treated for contusions and facial burns.

18. (C) PA security sources said on May 15 that approximately 20 settlers from Yitzhar temporarily blocked the main road leading to Nablus on May 14. No injuries or damage were reported.

WALLES